

Senate Resolution 257

By: Senators Thomas of the 54th, Orrock of the 36th, Johnson of the 1st, Unterman of the 45th, Weber of the 40th and others

ADOPTED

A RESOLUTION

Creating the Alzheimer's Disease and Other Dementias Task Force; and for other purposes.

WHEREAS, Alzheimer's disease is a slow, progressive disorder of the brain that results in loss of memory and other cognitive function and, eventually, results in death; and

WHEREAS, because Alzheimer's is accompanied by memory loss, poor judgment, changes in personality and behavior, and a tendency to wander, individuals with this disease are at increased risk for accidental injury, getting lost, and being abused, neglected and exploited; and

WHEREAS, research shows that one in ten people over the age of 65 and almost one in every two people over the age of 85 have Alzheimer's disease or a related dementia; given Georgia's population, that means that approximately 200,000 Georgians suffer from Alzheimer's disease or a related dementia; and

WHEREAS, the number of persons with Alzheimer's disease is expected to increase exponentially due to the aging of the baby boomers; and

WHEREAS, Alzheimer's disease takes an enormous toll on loving family members, with an estimated one in four Georgians acting as caregivers for each individual with the disease; and

WHEREAS, caregivers for individuals with Alzheimer's watch closely the deleterious effects of the disease and often suffer more stress, depression, and health problems than caregivers of people with other illnesses; and

WHEREAS, there is an increasing number of individuals developing younger-onset Alzheimer's disease, a form of the disease occurring prior to age 65, when individuals are in their 30's, 40's, 50's, or early 60's; and

WHEREAS, younger-onset Alzheimer's disease can be particularly difficult on family dynamics and economics due to the early age of disease onset; and

WHEREAS, no surveillance currently exists in Georgia to track the number of persons who have been diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease; and

WHEREAS, there is an economic impact of Alzheimer's disease upon the business, medical, and caregiver communities of Georgia; and

WHEREAS, the State of Georgia needs to assess the current and future impact of Alzheimer's disease on Georgians and state systems, programs, and services to assure an integrated, comprehensive, coordinated, and up-to-date strategy to address the needs of this growing segment of Georgia's population.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF GEORGIA:

SECTION 1.

Effective July 1, 2009, the Alzheimer's Disease and Other Dementias Task Force is established for the purpose of studying the issues and making recommendations in accordance with this resolution.

SECTION 2.

- (a) The task force shall be composed of 16 members to be appointed as follows:
- (1) A representative from the research community, appointed by the Governor;
 - (2) A representative from an association advocating for research on Alzheimer's disease, appointed by the Governor;
 - (3) A licensed physician, appointed by the Governor;
 - (4) An individual with Alzheimer's disease, appointed by the Governor;
 - (5) A representative from the Department of Human Resources, appointed by the Governor;
 - (6) A caregiver of a patient with Alzheimer's disease, appointed by the Governor;
 - (7) Two members of the Georgia House of Representatives, appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives;
 - (8) Two members of the Georgia Senate, appointed by the President of the Senate;

- (9) Three members who are stakeholders, including one member who has early memory loss, appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives; and
- (10) Three members who are stakeholders, including one member who has early memory loss, appointed by the President of the Senate.
- (b) The Governor shall designate a member to serve as chairperson of the task force. The task force shall meet at the call of the chairperson.
- (c) Members of the task force shall serve without compensation.

SECTION 3.

The task force shall study and make recommendations on:

- (1) Surveillance of persons with Alzheimer's disease for purposes of having proper estimates of the number of Georgians with Alzheimer's disease;
- (2) Safety and well-being of persons with Alzheimer's disease (e.g., driving assessment and emergency placement for persons who are found or abandoned);
- (3) Dementia care practice recommendations to ensure quality care in long-term settings;
- (4) Future need for dementia related services as well as funding for programs for individuals with dementias, including those with younger-onset; and
- (5) Implementation of the following action steps to improve public health surveillance:
 - (A) Add the Communicable Disease Center's optional module on caregiving, including questions about memory and other cognitive problems of the care recipient to Georgia's 2009 Behavioral Risk Factors Surveillance System;
 - (B) Add the additional questions on memory and thinking to Georgia's 2009 Behavioral Risk Factors Surveillance System;
 - (C) Plan for simple and cross-tabular analysis of the data generated in this state and for its wide public dissemination; and
 - (D) Add the module on memory and other cognitive problems that is being developed by the Communicable Disease Center's expert panel to Georgia's 2010 Behavioral Risk Factors Surveillance System.

SECTION 4.

The task force shall present an interim report to the Governor, the President of the Senate, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, the Commissioner of the Georgia Department of Human Resources, and the Commissioner of the Georgia Department of Community Health, by January 1, 2010, with a final report due on June 30, 2010. The task force shall stand abolished on June 30, 2010.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Secretary of the Senate is authorized and directed to transmit appropriate copies of this resolution to the public and the press.